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LETTERS

PSYCHIATRIC WARFARE AGAINST RELIGION IN THE USSR

Orthodox Nun Sent to Psychiatric Hospital

An Orthodox nun, Valeria Makeeva, aged 50, has been in detention in Moscow since July 15, 1978, for manufacturing religious objects. She has been examined at the Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry in Moscow. Mother Valeria has already spent two spells in psychiatric hospitals. The first time was for four years from 1949, when she feigned mental illness to avoid a long sentence in the Stalinist concentration camps for her religious activities. In 1972 she was interned for seven months in Psychiatric Hospital No. 5 in Moscow for reproducing Orthodox prayer books and various religious objects. She was again detained for five months in 1975 in the prison at Alexandrov, Vladimir region, before being found not responsible for her actions and released.

During the present examination she convinced the Serbsky Institute psychiatrists that she was not schizophrenic (the original diagnosis of 1949) and they have classified her as psychopathic with personality change. Relatives and acquaintances (including psychiatrists), however, consider her to be in good mental health. Until her trial in April of this year she was being held in the hospital of the Butyrki prison in Moscow. Although she has been in poor health, Mother Valeria would much prefer to be sent to a labor camp than be committed for forcible psychiatric treatment for what could be an indefinite period.

In April of this year Mother Valeria was tried and sent to a hospital for the criminally insane for an indefinite term. She was tried on charges of illegal commerce for the specific "crime" of making and selling belts embroidered with words from Psalm 90 ("He that dwelleth in the help of the Most High"). According to Dr. Andrew Sakharov, noted fighter for citizens' rights in the USSR, the sentence was not legal for the crime. The Working Committee to Investigate the Use of Psychiatry for Political Ends has taken up the case in Moscow.

Information from *Keston News Service,* Heathfield Road, Keston, Kent BR2 6BA, England, nos. 68 and 70.

Orthodox Layman, Member of the "Christian Seminar"

Alexander Kuxkin has been forcibly placed in a Moscow Psychiatric Hospital, where the cross he was wearing was torn from his neck. A young Orthodox believer, A. Kyzkin, who supports a sick mother and a young brother, was a member of the Christian Seminar conducted by Alexander Ogorodnikov, who is now in prison. Other participants in this Seminar (which was only a small discussion group) have been subjected to similar fates. Some of them have been accused of hooliganism.

Information from *Religion and Atheism in the USSR,* Munich April, 1979, p. 7.

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COVER: Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich, a rare photograph of him when he was a missionary hieromonk in America around 1905. Color icon on page 110: the work of Priest Theodore Jurewicz.

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ARCHBISHOP SERAPHIM OF UGLICH

MARTYROLOGY OF THE COMMUNIST YOKE

Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich

By S. Grotov*

IN THE AUTUMN OF 1930 there came to the just-begun construction of the White Sea Canal** some convoys of prisoners from Solovki. They were received and first of all sent to the bathhouse for "sanitizing"—that is, disinfection of the clothes they were wearing, and a compulsory shaving with a machine of the hair on their head, face, and whole body. Then there was a medical examination by the physicians who were themselves prisoners. Here for the first time, when I was working as a physicians' helper at this station, I saw Archbishop Seraphim, a tall, bent-over old man with his head and face already shaved under machine number one. Often, when talking with him after this, I learned much from him, and from other bishops who had come with him I learned also about him; of these latter I shall name only Archbishop Pachomius of Chernigov, for the younger ones might still be in the torture-chambers now, and every mention of them in the press will increase the weight of their bonds.

Archbishop Seraphim, in the world surnamed Samoilovich, was born about 1882 and studied at the Poltava Theological Seminary. He became a monk at a young age in one of the southern dioceses after several years of teaching in the seminary. He was assigned at the beginning of our century as a missionary in the Aleutian-Alaskan Diocese of the United States of America, where he was a fervent fellow-laborer with Bishop Tikhon, the future Patriarch. Bishop Tikhon highly valued this zealous missionary, who

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* Translated from Protopresbyter Michael Polsky, *Russia's New Martyrs,* Jordanville, N.Y., 1957, vol. 2, pp. 12-16. The author (who has also used the pen-names of S. Nesterov and Alexei Rostov) is still living in Italy, and is a correspondent for the Russian newspaper *Nasha Strana,* Buenos Aires, Argentina.

** One of the notorious Soviet slave-labor projects of the 1930's in northern Russia.

united personal asceticism and an intelligent approach both to the half-wild Aleut flock and to the American government in Alaska. He spent six years in all in America.

After Bishop Tikhon was assigned to Yaroslavl in 1907, he called Hieromonk Seraphim and assigned him as Abbot of the Tolga Monastery, four miles above Yaroslavl, which was the summer residence of the Yaroslavl bishop. Anyone who has travelled along the Volga before 1920 will remember how, when the ship stopped at the Monastery dock, the crew and passengers would go down to the dock and pray at a moleben before a copy of the Tolga Icon of the Mother of God (whose feast is August 8/21), venerating the holy image, and how the ship would depart while the Monastery choir was still singing "Queen of the world, be our intercessor."

Father Seraphim wrote a serious historical work, *A History of the Tolga Monastery, 1314-1915,* in preparation for the celebration of the six-hundreth anniversary of the Monastery in August, 1914. For the benefit of the Monastery and the surrounding flock, he built and opened in 1913, a mile from the Monastery at the edge of a splendid forest, a school of bee-keeping for the orphan children the Monastery looked after. Three weeks before the six-hundreth anniversary of the Monastery, however, the First World War broke out. The Abbot, in the very first days of the War, built hospital wards and actively helped Archbishop Agafangel in the governing of the Diocese during the years of war and revolution. His courage and presence of mind saved the Monastery from destruction in the summer of 1918, when the Communist Chekists ran about in the days of the "Yaroslavl Uprising" into the cells, basements, and grave vaults in the Monastery cemetery in search of "rebels." 350 innocent Yaroslavl citizens were executed by firing squad as a reply to the assassination of the military governor, Commissar Nahimson, and the Economic Commissar Zakgeim.

Soon Father Seraphim was transferred to Uglich, where he was made abbot of the Protection Monastery and raised to the rank of Archimandrite. In 1920 he was ordained bishop in Uglich, a diocese filled with the memory of the Tsarevich who, 329 years before the martyred Tsarevich Alexis of our own days, had received the same kind of cruel end.*

In 1915 Bishop Seraphim was raised to the rank of Archbishop, and in the difficult and confused days after the death of Patriarch Tikhon he was appointed (in 1926) as one of the Substitutes of the Patriarchial Locum Tenens, and occupied this position from November, 1926, to March, 1927 (the

* The Tsarevich Dimitry, who was killed in 1589 at the instigation of Boris Godunov; commemorated in the Orthodox calendar on May 15.

period when Metropolitan Sergius was under arrest). Archbishop Seraphim categorically refused to issue a declaration of collaboration with the Soviet authorities, which the latter were demanding at this time (the same declaration which Metr. Sergius was later to issue), saying that "I do not consider myself authorized to decide basic questions of principle without the hierarchs who are in prison." On December 16/29, 1926, he addressed the episcopate of the Russian Church with this message: "I implore my colleagues, the bishops, to help me to bear the heavy and responsible cross of the governance of the Russian Church; I beg you to cut your correspondence and relations with me to the minimum, leaving all except matters of principle and those affecting the whole Church (as, for example, the selection and ordination of bishops) to be decided locally."**

All the predecessors of Archbishop Seraphim in the position of Substitute of Locum Tenens were in prison, and he knew that the same fate was awaiting him as well as the successor he would choose in case of his own arrest. Therefore, when entering into the exercise of the authority of this position, in December, 1926, he did not assign any successor. When, at his interrogation by the GPU, he was asked: "Who will be the head of the Church if we do not free you?" he only replied: "The Lord Jesus Christ Himself." At this reply, the astonished interrogator looked at him and said: "All of you Bishops have left substitutes for yourselves, as did Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitan Peter." "Well, I myself have left the Church to the Lord God," repeated Archbishop Seraphim, "and I have done this on purpose. Let it be known to the whole world how freely Orthodox Christians are living in a free government."*

Three days later Archbishop Seraphim was freed and sent to Uglich, and he governed the Church until March, 1927, when he gave over the government to Metropolitan Sergius, who had just been freed from prison.

Four months later Archbishop Seraphim accused the apostasy of Metropolitan Sergius (the Declaration of July 16/29, 1927), and soon he was arrested and sentenced to five years in concentration camp, being sent to Solovki. There almost the whole time he languished at the common labors. Once when dragging bricks in the construction of a two-storey building, he fell from a ladder and broke a rib, which healed poorly and made him an

** Facts and quotes in this paragraph have been added from I.M. Andrevev, *A Brief Survey of the History of the Russian Church from the Revolution to Our Days*, Jordanville, 1951, p. 49; and Lev Regelson, *The Tragedy of the Russian Church*, YMCA Press, Paris, 1977, p. 584 (both in Russian).

* This incident is as related in the *Messenger of the Russian Student Christian Movement*, no. 7, July, 1927.

invalid. But no kind of persecution could break his powerful will.

I myself saw him for the first time after his arrival with the convoy of prisoners from Solovki in the autumn of 1930 at the assignment point called "New Bírzha," near the northern semaphore station "Mai-Gub," on the Murmansk Railroad.

Later I was able to have a closer acquaintance with him. Having gone on invalid status, he often was in the ambulatory section, and we, the physicians' helpers, tried to help him; he was suffering from chronic pleuritis as well as a decompensated miocarditis and general arteriosclerosis.

Once, at the end of Octobr on a damp, inclement day, passing by the disinfection cabin, where things were disinfected behind a hermetically-sealed door, with a prisoner-invalid for a watchman outside the room to keep robbers out, I heard myself called by name. Going up, I saw Archbishop Seraphim, numb with cold, standing watch. "They put us invalids at this post for two hours at a time, but I have been standing here from twelve noon and they haven't sent anyone to replace me." (It was then about 6 p.m.) I ran to the invalid barracks. "Where is the chief?" "He went to the movies," replied the clerk. "Tell him that I am going to make a report to the Head of the Sanitary Division, that he is keeping prisoner Samoilovich at an outdoor post for six hours instead of two." The clerk roused himself and ran to the movie house. Ten minutes later he ran back. "The chief has ordered him to be replaced, and asks you not to make a report." "Good, but in ten minutes I will check."

And in fact, he woke up a decrepit colonel who was dozing on a board-bed and sent him running to replace Vladika. The old man ran to the disinfection room. Half an hour later I again went into the barracks. The numb Archbishop with satisfaction was drinking some hot tea from a cup, and I wished him a good rest.

He was considered a "prohibited one"—that is, he had no right to go out of the camp into the administrative buildings outside the barbed-wire fence.

Once he asked me to call Archimandrite Gury Yegorov, who worked in the Financial Division and was a fierce supporter of Metropolitan Sergius; later he was freed from exile, having finished his five-year term in concentration camp in 1934, and in 1946 was ordained Bishop. From that time on he was head of the "Patriarchal" Church in Central Asia, with the title Bishop of Tashkent and Central Asia.

Archimandrite Gury frowned. "After all, the Archbishop is not 'ours,'

and it's not fitting for me even to talk with him. I have no right to receive a blessing from him."

"No one is asking this of you, Father Gury. But after all, he is a prohibited one, and you and I have passes. If, knowing who you are, he has asked you to come to him in camp," I protested, "can we, ourselves prisoners, refuse to visit a prisoner in the camp, even if he is a heretic? A physicians' helper shouldn't have to teach an Archimandrite." He was upset and came with me. I accompanied him to the ambulatory section and left him together with the Archbishop, whom I had summoned there.

The handsome forty-year-old Archimandrite-bookkeeper, bending his head, spoke with the bent-over, decrepit Archbishop. What they talked about, I don't know.

In March, 1932, Vladika was freed six months before the end of his term, counting (in accordance with the decree of 1931) five days of labor equal to six. This was arranged for him by the pious prisoners of the book-keeping division, who counted the working days in such a way as to reduce the term. In 1934 this "liberal" decree was revoked.

Archbishop Seraphim was sent by convoy into exile into the region of Komi, where the Zyryani people live, to the north of Vyatka. He grew weaker in body, but was firm in spirit. He considered that *in an epoch of persecutions there should not be any single centralized Church government.* A bishop should govern his diocese independently. In exile he should be the head of the secret Church wherever he is staying; he should ordain secret priests and perform secret monastic tonsures.

From believers I heard that Archbishop Seraphim did not return from exile. His sentence ended in 1935. It is said, vaguely, that he died somewhere without medical help, in deprivation—which is easy to believe for anyone who knew the condition of his ailing heart, even in 1932.

The ailing Archbishop Seraphim was often brought to my mind in my wanderings in prisons and exiles, when, deprived of physical contact with believers, I mentally remembered him in prayer. I thought of his meekly-smiling, exhausted face, and bowing down in prayer I would literally feel on my head his thin, rough Archpastoral hand covered with scars.

EPISTLE OF

Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich

Archbishop Seraphim wrote several epistles protesting the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius. As a vicar of the Yaroslavl Diocese, he signed, together with Metropolitan Agafangel, Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd (who was in Yaroslavl at the time), Archbishop Barlaam of Perm, and Bishop Eugene of Rostov, a statement of separation from Metropolitan Sergius on February 6, 1928 (Russian text in Polsky, vol. II, pp. 10-11). At the same time he sent the following epistle to Metr. Sergius in his own name. The tone of courageous protest, based not on any narrow "letter of the law" but on heartfelt concern for the good of Christ's Church, coupled with sincere compassion shown for the erring Metropolitan Sergius, make this one of the classic documents of the founding bishops of Russia's Catacomb Church.

Later, in the summer of 1928, Archbishop Seraphim sent a new epistle accusing Metr. Sergius of the serious sin of "drawing our faint-hearted and infirm brethren into neo-renovationism" (cited in Regelson, p. 585).

EXHORTATION OF ARCHBISHOP SERAPHIM OF UGLICH, ADDRESSED TO METROPOLITAN SERGIUS AND GIVEN TO HIM ON JANUARY 27/FEBRUARY 9, 1928*

Your Eminence:

The period of more than half a year which has passed since the issuance by you of the Declaration of July 16/29, 1927, has indicated that all your hopes for a "peaceful arrangement" of our church matters, for bringing our whole church government into proper order and arrangement, have been in vain, and your "confidence in the possibility of our peaceful life and

* Translated from the Russian text in Polsky, vol. II, pp. 16-18.

activity within the bounds of the law" is completely unrealizable and under the present conditions can never come into being.

On the contrary, facts almost every day testify that for Orthodox people it has become even more difficult to live. It is especially difficult to acknowledge that you, who so wisely and firmly held the banner of Orthodoxy in the first period of being the Substitute of the Locum Tenens, have now gone off the straight path and have gone into the byway of compromises which are against the Church.

You have subjected us to the sphere of terrible moral torments, and you have made yourself the first of such tormented ones, for you must suffer both for yourself and for us. Previously we suffered and endured in silence, knowing we were suffering for the truth, and that the power of God was with us and could not be conquered by any sufferings. This power is what strengthened us and inspired us with the hope that at a time known to God alone the truth of Orthodoxy would be triumphant, for to it alone is promised unfailingly that whenever needful the almighty help of God will be given to it.

By your Declaration and the church policy founded upon it, you are trying to lead us into a sphere where we will now be deprived of this hope, for you are leading us away from the service of truth; and God does not help lies.

We are loyal citizens of the USSR. We obediently fulfill all the commands of the Soviet authority. We have never intended and do not intend to rebel against it, but we wish to be honorable and upright members also of the Church of Christ on earth and not to "repaint it in Soviet colors," because we know that this is useless, and that serious and upright people will not believe it.

While it is still not too late, while this terrible abyss has not yet entirely overwhelmed you, this abyss which is ready to swallow you ingloriously and forever, gather together your intellectual and moral powers which not long ago were still strong; stand up in all your spiritual stature; issue another declaration to correct the first one, or at least one similar to the one which you sent in the first period when you were the Substitute of the Locum Tenens; cut with the grace-given impulses of the Spirit the chains which bind you, and come out into holy freedom. All the true sons of the Church will pray to God for you; all the good shepherds and courageous archpastors will immediately be on your side. All the many sufferers will embrace you spiritually—this voice of witnesses of pure truth who are exiled from their

flocks and the brethren; the unconquerable Truth itself will be for you. It will show you the further path; it will preserve and defend you.

Dear Vladika: I can imagine how you must suffer! But why do you, experiencing these sufferings yourself, not desire to lighten them for those who at one time trusted you? With what joy I gave over to you my own rights as Substitute of the Locum Tenens, believing that your wisdom and experience would cooperate with you in the governance of the Church.

But what happened? Can this fatal act really not be corrected? Will you really not find the courage to acknowledge your error, your fatal mistake, the issuance by you of the Declaration of July 16/29, 1927? You wrote to me and sincerely believed that the path you have chosen will bring peace to the Church. And what do you hear and see now? A frightful groan is carried up from all the ends of Russia. You promised to pull out two or three sufferers here and there and return them to the society of the faithful; but look how many new sufferers have appeared, whose sufferings are made yet deeper by the awareness that they are the result of your new church policy. Does this groan of the sufferers from the shores of the Oba and Enisei Rivers, from the far-off islands of the White Sea, from the deserts beyond the Caspian Sea, from the mountain ridges of Turkestan—does this groan not reach to your heart?

How could you, by your Declaration, place upon them and upon many the stigma of opponents of the present civil order, when they and we in our spiritual nature have always been foreign to politics, guarding strictly, with self-sacrifice, the purity of Orthodoxy?

Is it for me, who am younger, to write these lines to you? Is it for me to teach an experienced and learned Hierarch of the Russian Church? Still, the voice of my conscience compels me again and again to disturb your spacious and good heart. Show courage; acknowledge your fatal mistake, and if it is impossible for you to issue a new declaration, then for the good of the Church, give over the authority and the rights of the Substitute of the Locum Tenens to someone else.

I have the right to write you these lines and make this offer, for many now reproach me, saying that I handed over these rights of the Substitute to you hastily and without reservation.

Having experienced myself this burden of church governance, I believe that in the quiet of your cell you are shedding bitter tears and are in a frightful anguish of spirit. And we pity you and weep together with you. And if there are separations of dioceses and parishes from you and your "Synod,"

this is an alarm-bell, a frightful alarm-bell of the exhausted hearts of the faithful, one that should be able to reach your heart and ignite it with the flame of self-sacrifice and readiness to lay down your life for your friends . . .

May the Lord help you and bless your courageous decision, which your archpastoral conscience will whisper to you and which we do not dictate to you, but with filial love offer to you for the salvation of your soul and the good of the Church.

It seems to me that one way out of the situation that has been created would be for you and all the faithful in our land who think in an Orthodox way to direct your gaze to the eldest Hierarch of the Russian Church, His Eminence Agathangel, Metropolitan of Yaroslavl.

Go to him with love and trust. Despite his advanced age, he has remained wise and powerful in spirit. His appeal from Perm was an act of zeal for the salvation of the Church. Stretch out your brotherly hands to him, give him a warm, brotherly greeting, ask him to help you out of this terrible and burdensome situation, and hand over to him your rights as Substitute until His Eminence, Metropolitan Peter, should return to power.

We archpastors, together with you, will help him in the governance of the Church with whatever strength and understanding we have, even without the organization of a "Synod."

Seraphim, Archbishop of Uglich, Vicar of the
Yaroslavl Diocese, Former Substitute of the
Patriarchal Locum Tenens.
Jan. 24/Feb. 6, 1928.

THE LIFE OF
SAINT ANDREW
FOOL FOR CHRIST OF CONSTANTINOPLE

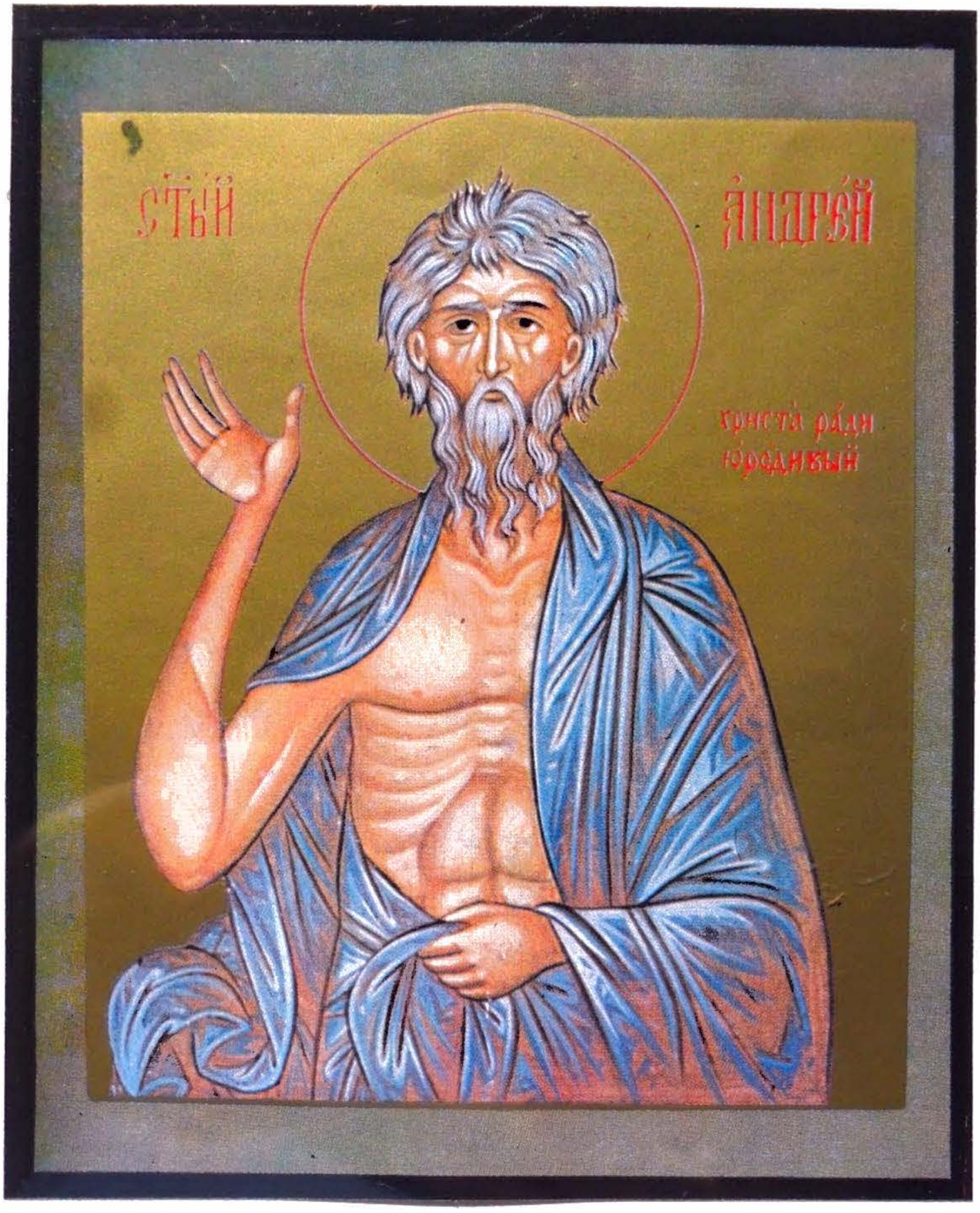
FROM THE *LIVES OF SAINTS*
ACCORDING TO ST. DEMETRIUS OF ROSTOV*

1. *The Saint is called to a life of struggle.*

IN THE REIGN of the Greek Emperor Leo the Great, the Wise (886-912), son of the Emperor Basil the Macedonian (867-886), there lived in Constantinople a certain man whose name was Theognostes. He bought a multitude of slaves, among whom was a certain boy, Slavic (Scythian) by blood, whose name was Andrew. This boy was handsome and outstanding by reason of his character. Theognostes loved him more than his other slaves, assigned him to be his most trusted servant, and sent him away to be educated in sacred books. Having studied the Sacred Scripture, Andrew often went to churches, prayed to God, and read sacred books. Once at night, while he was standing at prayer, the cunning devil, seeing this, envied this good work and began to knock loudly at the door of the room where the youth was. Andrew became terrified, ceased to pray, quickly lay down in bed, and covered himself with a deer skin. Seeing this, satan rejoiced and said to another demon: "Do you see this youth? Not long ago he was eating beans, and now he is already arming himself against us!"

Having said this, satan vanished. The blessed one fell sound asleep from fear, and in his sleep he saw the following vision: It seemed to him that he was in a great arena, on one side of which stood a multitude of Ethiopians, and on the other a multitude of holy men in white garments.

* October volume, Moscow, 1904, pp. 52-74. The Russian *Life* is largely a condensed version of the original *Life* by the Saint's disciple Nicephorus. The titles have been added by the translator.



SAINT ANDREW, FOOL FOR CHRIST

Commemorated on October 2

TROPARION, TONE 1

Having heard the voice of Thine Apostle Paul, who said:* We are fools for Christ's sake,* Thy slave Andrew* was a fool upon earth for Thy sake, O Christ God.* Wherefore, venerating now his memory, we pray to Thee:* O Lord, save our souls.

Between the two sides there was as it were a contest and battle. The Ethiopians, having on their side one dark giant, with pride proposed to those clothed in white garments that they should take from their midst one such battler who would be strong enough to fight with their black Ethiopian, who was the general of their numberless legion. The dark Ethiopians were boasting of their power, but those in white garments answered nothing to them. Blessed Andrew stood there and looked, desiring to know who would decide to enter into battle with this frightful adversary. And then he saw a splendid youth coming down from above, holding in his hands three crowns: one of them was adorned with pure gold and precious stones, the second with a large shining pearl, and the third—the largest of the crowns—was woven of unfading white and red flowers and branches from the paradise of God. These crowns were so wondrous in beauty as to be beyond comprehension, and undescribable by the human tongue.

Seeing this, Andrew thought how he might receive at least one of these three crowns. Going up to the youth who had appeared, he said: "For the sake of Christ, tell me, are you selling these crowns? Although I myself cannot buy them, still, if you wait a little for me I will go and tell my master, and he will pay you for these crowns as much as you wish."

The youth, shining in face, said to him: "Believe me, beloved, if you were to offer me all the gold in the whole world, I would not sell, either to you or to anyone else, a single flower from these crowns, because these crowns have been made from the heavenly treasures of Christ, and not from the adornments of the vain world. They are used to crown those who will battle against those black Ethiopians. If you wish to receive one—and not just one, but all three crowns—then enter into single combat with that black Ethiopian, and when you shall conquer him, you will take from me all three of the crowns you see."

Hearing this, Andrew was filled with determination and said to the youth: "Believe me, I will do what you have said; only instruct me in his tricks." The youth said: "And do you not know in what his cunning consists? Are the Ethiopians not frightful and threatening in appearance? But actually they are weak in power. Do not fear his immense size and fearful gaze; he is weak and rotten, like decayed grass!"

Strengthening Andrew by these words, the splendid youth began to teach him how to fight with the Ethiopian. He said: "When the Ethiopian seizes you and begins to fight with you, do not be afraid, but engage him in the form of a cross—and you will see the help of God."

After this the blessed one went out in front and in a loud voice

cried to the Ethiopian: "Come out to battle." Threatening and trying to frighten him, the Ethiopian approached and seized Andrew, and for quite a long time he turned Andrew about, first towards one side and then towards the other. The Ethiopians began to applaud, and those clothed in white garments seemed to grow pale, because they feared that this Ethiopian would hit Andrew against the ground. Andrew was already conquered by the Ethiopian, but straightening himself, he strove against him in the form of a cross. The demon collapsed like an immense tree that has been undercut, and in falling he hit his forehead on a stone and cried out, "Alas, alas!" Those clothed in white garments greatly rejoiced. They lifted Andrew in their arms, began to kiss him, and triumphed in his victory over the Ethiopian.

Then the black soldiers with great shame were turned to flight, and the splendid youth gave the crowns to Andrew and, embracing him, said: "Go in peace. From this time forth you will be our friend and brother. Go out to the struggle of virtue: be naked and a fool for My sake, and you will be manifest in the day of My Kingdom as a participant of many good things."

Having heard this from that splendid youth, the blessed Andrew awoke from sleep and was astonished at the extraordinary dream. And from that time he became a fool for Christ's sake.

The next day, having risen from sleep, he prayed, took a knife, and went to the well; here he took his garment off and, pretending to be out of his mind, he cut it into pieces. Early in the morning a cook came to the well for water and, seeing Andrew as in some kind of delirium, he went up and told their master about it. Grieving over Andrew, the master went to him and found him as if out of his wits and speaking senselessly. Thinking that Andrew was possessed by a demon, he put iron chains on him and ordered that he be brought to the church of St. Anastasia. During the day Andrew pretended to be out of his mind, and at night he prayed to God and to St. Anastasia. But in the depths of his heart he reflected about whether the work which he had undertaken was pleasing to God or not, and he wished to receive a confirmation of this.

As he was thus reflecting, in a vision there appeared to him five women and a single bright Elder walking, treating and visiting the sick. They came likewise to Andrew, and the Elder said to the eldest woman: "Lady Anastasia, why do you not treat him?" "Master!" the woman replied. "He has been treated by Him Who said to him: 'Become a fool for My sake, and in the day of My Kingdom you will be a participant of many good things.' He does not need treatment."

Having said this, they went into the church, from which they did

not come out again, although Andrew looked behind them until the wood was struck for Matins. Then the blessed one understood that his struggle was pleasing to God; he rejoiced in spirit and all the more fervently began to labor—at night in prayer, and in the daytime in exploits of foolishness.

Once blessed Andrew at night, according to his custom, was offering up in the depths of his heart prayer to God and to Saint Anastasia the Martyr. And behold, there came to him, in clearly visible form, the devil with a multitude of demons, holding an axe; the other demons carried knives, timbers, stakes, and spears, as if intending to kill the blessed one. The previous Ethiopian also appeared in the form in which he had battled with Andrew, and while still far off he roared at him. Throwing himself upon the Saint, he wished to cut him to pieces with the hatchet which he held in his hands. After him all the other demons also threw themselves upon him. The Saint, however, raising his hands with tears, cried out to the Lord: "Do not give to the beasts the soul which offers to Thee glory and honor!" And then he again cried out: "Holy Apostle John the Theologian, help me!"

And behold, thunder resounded, a multitude of men appeared, and a splendid Elder appeared who had a face brighter than the sun, and with him a great multitude of servants. Threateningly and strictly he said to those who were with him: "Close the gates so that not one of these may escape!" Immediately the gates were closed, and all the Ethiopians were seized. And Andrew heard how one of the demons secretly said to his companion: "Cursed is the hour in which we were tempted; for John is unmerciful and wishes to torture us cruelly!"

Saint John, however, commanded that the people who had come with him, clothed in white garments, should take the iron chains from the neck of Andrew. Then he stood behind the gates and said: "Lead the Ethiopians to me, one at a time." They brought the first demon and stretched him out on the ground. Taking the chains, the Apostle bent them over three times and gave the devil a hundred blows. The devil cried out like a man: "Have mercy on me!"

After this they stretched out another demon, and he likewise was subjected to blows; then a third one, and he also received as many blows. And the blows to which the Lord subjected the demons were not phantom blows, but were real punishment which brought suffering to the demons. When in this way all the Ethiopians had been punished, John said to them: "Go and show to your father satan the blows which have been given you; see if this will be pleasing to him!"

After those clothed in white garments had departed and the demons

had vanished, the splendid Elder went up to Andrew, the slave of God, and placing the chains on his neck said to him: "You see how I hastened to your help, for I am very concerned about you, since God has entrusted me to care for you. And so, have patience: soon you will be set free and you will walk in your own will wherever you please." "My Lord," said Andrew, "who are you?" The Elder replied: "I am he who lay on the breast of the Lord." (John 13:22.)

Having said this, Saint John shone like lightning and vanished from the eyes of the youth. And Blessed Andrew glorified God because He had sent His beloved disciple to his aid.

After the appearance of Saint John the Theologian, the conversation with him, and the torments given to the demons, blessed Andrew, being chained as before, lay down, desiring to fall asleep—and at this time he came into an ecstatic state. He saw himself in a royal palace. On a throne, in great glory, sat a King Who called Andrew to Him and asked: "Do you desire with your whole soul to labor for Me?" Andrew replied: "I desire it, O Lord!"

The King gave him something very bitter to eat, and at the same time said to him: "Such is the sorrowful path of those who labor for Me in this world."

After this He gave Andrew to eat something whiter than snow and sweeter than manna. After eating it Andrew rejoiced and forgot the bitterness of the first food. And the King said to him: "Such is My food for those who serve Me and manfully endure to the end. And you also: manfully complete your struggle as you have begun it; for having borne a little suffering in this life, you will remain eternally in unending life."

Awakening from sleep, Andrew had the thought that the first food which he had seen, which was bitter, represented patience in the present world, and the latter food, which was sweet, represented eternal life.

After this, Andrew's master kept him with him for four months, and then let him go free.

2. *He endures struggles, deprivations, and mockeries.*

Pretending to be out of his mind, Andrew began to run about the streets. He walked in the city, *being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated, of whom the world was not worthy* (Heb. 11:37-38). Some people mocked him as a fool, others chased him away, despising him like a stinking dog, while others considered him to be possessed by a demon, and small children taunted and beat the blessed one. But he endured everything and prayed for those who offended him.

If any of those who love and are merciful to the poor would give Andrew some alms, he would take it but then give it away to other paupers. However, he gave away in such a way that no one would know that he was giving alms: becoming angry at the poor people, and as if desiring to beat them, like a fool he would throw into their face the money which he held in his hands, and the poor people would gather it up. Sometimes he did not eat bread for three days at a time, and sometimes he was hungry for a whole week, and if he did not find someone who would give him a crust of bread, he would spend a second week without food. For clothing Andrew had a worthless shirt which hardly covered his bodily nakedness. Imitating in everything Saint Symeon the fool for Christ,* in the daytime he ran about the streets, and at night he remained in prayer. Living in such a large city, among a large population, he did not have a place to lay his head. The poor chased him away from their huts, and the rich did not allow him into the courtyards of their dwellings. When he had to sleep and give a little rest to his tortured body, he would seek a pile of garbage, where dogs were lying, and settle himself in their midst. But even the dogs did not allow the slave of God to come close; some bit him and chased him away, while others ran away from him themselves. He never went to sleep under a roof, but always, whether in cold or heat, wallowing like Lazarus in filth and dirt, trampled upon by men and animals. Thus this voluntary martyr suffered, and thus did the fool laugh at the whole world: *For the foolishness of God is wiser than men* (I Cor. 1:25). And the grace of the Holy Spirit came to dwell in him, and he received the gift of clairvoyance, for he had begun to penetrate the thoughts of men.

3. *His prophecy to the gravedigger.*

Once in Constantinople the daughter of a certain nobleman died. She had spent her life in virginal purity, and in dying she gave a testament that she be buried beyond the city in the cemetery for paupers which was in the garden of her father. When she died she was brought to this place, where she was buried according to the Christian custom. At this time there was in Constantinople a gravedigger who would dig up the graves and take the clothing from the corpses. Standing in the road, he looked to see where the virgin would be buried. Noting the place of her sepulchre, he decided, when night came, to dig up the grave and take the clothing from the dead girl.

Now it happened that Saint Andrew also, in performing his usual struggles of foolishness for Christ's sake, came to this place. As soon as he

* Who labored in Edessa, Syria, about 590; commemorated July 21.

noticed this gravedigger, he foresaw in spirit his evil intent. Desiring to dissuade the thief from his intended deed, and foreseeing what punishment would come to him, Saint Andrew looked at him with a severe appearance and, as if in great anger, said: "Thus saith the Spirit Who judges those who take the garments from those lying in the tombs: You will no longer see the sun; you will no longer see the day nor the face of man. The gates of your house shall be closed for you, and never will they be opened. The day will grow dark for you and will never grow light again."

Hearing this, the gravedigger did not understand what the Saint was talking about, and he went away, paying no attention to his words. The Saint, however, again looked at him and said: "Are you going away? Do not steal! But if you do this, then I bear witness by the name of Jesus: you will never see the sun again!"

Understanding that the Saint was speaking to him, the gravedigger was astonished how he had discovered his intention, and returning to the Saint, he said: "You are simply possessed by a demon, and it is by the instigation of the demon that you speak of what is secret and unknown! But I will deliberately go to that place so as to see whether your words will be fulfilled!"

After this the Saint went away, continuing to be foolish. With the coming of evening, having chosen a suitable time, the thief rolled away the stone and entered the tomb. First of all he took the upper garment of the reposed one and all her ornaments, for they were very valuable. Having these, he intended to go away, but some kind of inner voice said to him: "Take also the undergarment; after all, it is a good one." Taking the undergarment from the girl, he was going to leave the tomb. The dead girl, however, by the commandment of God, raised her right hand and struck the gravedigger in the face, and he was immediately blinded. Then the unfortunate one was terrified and trembled, so that from fear his jaw began to shake, and his teeth, his knees and all his bones likewise.

And the dead girl opened her mouth and said: "O unfortunate and cursed man! You did not fear God; you did not think that you also are a man. You should have been ashamed of a virgin's nakedness; you should have been satisfied with what you had already taken and at least have left the undergarment for my naked body. But you had no mercy on me, but were cruel to me, thinking to make me a laughing-stock before all the holy virgins in the day of the Lord's Second Coming. But now I will treat you in such a way that you will never steal again, so that you might know that Jesus Christ our God is alive, and that after death there is a judgment, reward and punishment."

Having uttered these words, the virgin arose and took her undergarment, dressed herself in it, and placing upon herself all the garments and ornaments, lay down and said: *Thou, O Lord, alone hast made me to dwell in hope* (Psalm 4:9).

With these words she again reposed in peace. And that miserable one had scarcely the power to leave the tomb and find the garden wall. Seizing with his hands first one and then the other wall of the enclosure, he went out on the nearest road and began to crawl to the city gates. To those who asked the reason for his blindness, he related something else entirely from what actually happened. Later, however, he told everything that had happened to him to a certain friend of his. From that time he began to beg alms, and in this way he gained a livelihood for himself. Often he would say to himself: "Be cursed, O my greediness, for because of you blindness has come upon me!"

He likewise remembered St. Andrew and was astonished at how everything had happened in accordance with what the Saint had foreseen and foretold.

4. *The rich man's funeral.*

Once, when going about the city, Saint Andrew saw that people were carrying a dead person towards him. The dead person was a very rich man, and around his coffin there were walking a great number of people with candles and censers. The clergy were singing the usual funeral hymns, and his relatives and close ones were weeping and lamenting. Seeing with his clairvoyant eyes what was being done with this dead man, the Saint stopped and began to look. And behold, falling for a long time into complete unconsciousness, he saw with his spiritual eyes a multitude of Ethiopians walking about the coffin and crying out loudly: "Woe to him, woe to him!"

Some of them were holding sacks in their hands, out of which they were sprinkling dust on the people who surrounded the dead man. Other devils were dancing and shamelessly mocking, like shameless harlots; and still others were howling like dogs, and others were grunting like pigs. The dead man was for them an object of joy and rejoicing. Certain of the demons who surrounded the dead man sprinkled him with foul-smelling water; others were flying in the air around the coffin on which the dead man lay. From the corpse of this dead sinner there came a suffocating stench. Going behind the dead man, the demons applauded and made a frightful noise with their feet, mocking those who were singing, and saying: "May God not let any of you pitiful Christians see the light, for you are singing over a dog: 'With the

saints give rest to his soul,' and at the same time you are calling him who was a participant in every evil a slave of God."

Looking again Andrew saw that one of the princes of the demons, with a flaming glance, went up to the coffin of that miserable one with pitch and sulphur in order to burn his body. And when the rite of burial had been performed, Saint Andrew saw an angel going in the form of a splendid youth and weeping bitter tears. Passing by, the angel drew near to Saint Andrew. The latter, thinking that this youth was one of those close to the dead man, and that this was the reason he was weeping thus, went up to him and said: "I beg you in the name of the God of heaven and earth: tell me the reason for your lamentation; for I have never seen anyone weeping so bitterly over a dead man as you are."

The angel replied: "This is why I am shedding tears: I was placed in order to guard this dead man, whom you see, when he was being carried to the grave. But the devil took him to himself. This is the reason for my lamentation and sorrow."

To this the Saint said to him: "Now I understand who you are. I implore you, holy angel, tell me what kind of sins this dead man had, for which the devil has taken him into his hands."

"Andrew, chosen one of God!" replied the angel. "Since you desire to know this, I will tell you without hiding anything. I see the beauty of your holy soul which is shining like pure gold, and having seen you I have become a little consoled in my grief. This man was in great honor with the emperor, but he was a frightful sinner and led a criminal life. He was an adulterer and a fornicator and was infected with the sin of Sodom. He was a flatterer, unmerciful, a lover of money, a liar, and a hater of men; one who kept evil memory of people and would take revenge, an oath-breaker. His poor servant he killed by hunger, blows, and nakedness, leaving her in wintertime without shoes and clothing. Many slaves he likewise killed and buried them in the horse field. Being possessed with lust which is hateful to God, he defiled 300 souls by his vile and repulsive sins of fornication. But for him also there came the time of harvest, and death found him unrepentant and with unspeakable sins. The demons took his soul, and his repulsive body—as you yourself see— the evil spirits accompanied with mockery. This is why, O holy soul, I am grieving; being overcome with deep sorrow, I weep because the one who was guarded by me has now become the laughing-stock of demons."

To these words of the angel of God the Saint said: "I implore you, friend, to cease this lamentation; the dead man acted badly, and therefore

he died without repentance. Let him be filled with the fruits of his deeds. But you, O flaming one, filled with every virtue, a servant of the Almighty Lord of Sabaoth, from now unto the ages will be under the grace of your God."

After these words, the angel invisibly departed from Andrew. The passersby in their unworthiness were unable to see the angel, and thinking that the Saint was speaking to himself, said to each other: "Look at this fool who is amusing himself and senselessly speaking to a wall."

And with this they pushed him and chased him away, saying: "What do you need, fool? You are unworthy to converse with men, and so you are conversing with a wall, is that it?"

The Saint departed in silence, and going away in a secret place he bitterly wept over the perdition of the unfortunate one whom he had seen being carried to the grave.

5. *The Saint's spiritual state is revealed.*

Once Saint Andrew was walking in a crowd of people at the market-place near the column which had been erected by Emperor Constantine.* A certain woman whose name was Barbara, being enlightened by the Holy Spirit, with terror beheld blessed Andrew in the crowd shining like a flaming pillar. At the same time certain foolish ones were pushing him and others were beating him; and many, looking at him, said, "This man is a fool; he has lost his reason. May this not happen even to our enemies!"

The demons, walking after Saint Andrew in the form of black Ethiopians, said: "Oh, if God would only not send upon earth another one like this; for no one has so withered our hearts as has this man, who, not desiring to serve his master, has pretended to be a fool and mocks the whole world."

And this woman saw that the Ethiopians were making note of those who beat the Saint and said to each other: "It is pleasant to us that they are beating him senselessly, because for the harm done to an innocent God-pleaser they will be condemned at the hour of their death and they will have no salvation."

Hearing this, the blessed one by the inspiration of the Spirit of God strove against them like a flame and destroyed with marvelous power the written notes of the demons and, in anger at them, said: "You must not make note of those who beat me, for I am praying to my Master that their giving blows to me may not be considered a sin against them. They are doing

* This was evidently the column erected by St. Constantine the Great at Rome, and moved by him to his new capital of Constantinople, in commemoration of his victory over Maxentius after the Cross of Christ had appeared in the sky.

this out of ignorance, and because of their ignorance they will obtain forgiveness."

While the Saint was saying this, suddenly the heavens were opened like a gate, and there came down over the Saint a multitude of most splendid swallows, and in their midst a large dove white as snow, holding in its beak a golden olive leaf. And the dove said to the Saint with a human voice: "Take this leaf; it is sent to you from paradise by the Lord Almighty as a sign of His good will towards you, for you have mercy upon and forgive those who give blows to you, and you pray for them that it might not be considered a sin against them."

With these words the dove came down upon the head of the Saint. Seeing all this, the pious woman was astonished and, coming to herself after this vision, she said: "How many luminaries God has on the earth, and no one knows them!"

Many times she intended to relate her vision to others, but the power of God prevented her. Later Andrew met her in a certain place and said to her: "Keep my secret, O Barbara, and do not relate what you have seen to anyone until I go *to the place of the wondrous tabernacle, even to the house of God* (Psalm 41:5).

"Precious luminary and Saint of God," said Barbara, "even if I wished to tell anyone of my vision, I could not, for the invisible power of God prevents me."

6. *The fate of the sinful nobleman.*

Walking about the city, Saint Andrew met once a certain nobleman, and spiritually beholding his life, spit on him and said: "Evil fornicator, blasphemer of the Church! You pretend that you are going to church and say, 'I am going to Matins,' whereas in reality you are going to satan for filthy deeds. O lawless one who rise at midnight and anger God! Already the time has come for you to be rewarded according to your deeds! Do you think that you will hide from the fearful, all-seeing, and all-testing eye of God?"

Hearing this, the nobleman hit his horse and left so as not to be put to shame even more. After the passage of some days he became very ill and began to wither. Those close to him brought him from one church to another, and from one physician to another, but this brought no benefit to him. Soon came the time for this miserable man to depart into eternal torment. One night the Saint saw around the house of this nobleman an angel of the Lord who had come from the west. The angel had the appearance of a fiery flame and had a great flaming shield. When the angel went up to the sick man he heard a voice from above: "Beat this blasphemer, this

repulsive sodomite, and while beating him say: 'Do you desire to commit yet more sins and defile other people? Will you continue to go out for diabolical and lawless deeds, while pretending that you are going to Matins?"

The angel began to do what was commanded of him. The voice of the angel and his blows were audible, but the angel was not visible. In such torments this man gave up his spirit.

7. *The conversion of the stingy monk.*

Going once to the marketplace, Saint Andrew met a monk whom everyone praised for his virtuous life. It is true that he struggled as befits a monk, but he was inclined beyond all measure to the love of money. Many of the residents of the city, confessing their sins to him, would give much gold for him to distribute to the poor; but he, being possessed with the insatiable passion of love of money, gave nothing to anyone, but would put everything into a sack and rejoice when he saw that the money was increasing. Going along the same road as this pitiful monk, blessed Andrew saw with his clairvoyant eyes that this lover of money was being twined about by a frightful serpent. Going up close to the monk, the Saint began to look closely at this serpent. The monk, however, taking Andrew for one of the paupers who would beg for alms, said to him: "My God have mercy on you, brother, but I have nothing to give you."

Going away a short distance from him, the blessed one noticed that around him, in the air over the serpent, there was written in dark letters these words: "The root of all iniquity is the serpent of the love of money."

Looking back, the Saint noticed two youths who were quarrelling with each other; one of them was dark and had dark eyes (this was a demon), and the other was an angel of God, who was white like the light of heaven. The dark one said: "The monk is mine, since he fulfills my will. He is unmerciful and a lover of money; he has no part with God and labors for me as a servant of the idols."

"No, he is mine," answered the angel, "for he fasts, prays, and is meek and humble."

Thus they disputed, and there was no agreement between them. And there was a voice from heaven that addressed the light-bearing angel, saying: "You have no part in that wearer of black; leave him, because he labors not for God but for mammon."

After this the angel of the Lord stepped away from him, and the spirit of darkness received the primacy over him. Seeing this, the blessed Andrew was astonished that the hostile demon had conquered the bright

angel in this dispute.

Meeting this monk once on the street, the Saint took him by his right hand and said: "Servant of God, listen to me, your slave, without becoming irritated, and mercifully accept my humble words, for because of you great sorrow has come upon me, and I cannot bear any longer that you, being at first a friend of God, have become now the servant and friend of the devil. You had wings like a Seraphim; why have you given yourself over to satan so that he might cut them off entirely? You had a face that was shining like lightning; why have you grown dark? Woe is me! You had sight as from many eyes, and now the serpent has entirely blinded you. You were a sun, but you have set in a dark and miserable night. Why, O brother, have you ruined your soul? Why have you become the friend of the demon of love of money, and allowed him to remain with you? Why do you gather gold? Do you think that you will be buried with it? After all, when you die it shall go to others. Do you really wish that stinginess should cause your perdition? While others die of hunger, cold and thirst, you rejoice beholding an abundance of gold. But are such the paths to repentance? Is such the rule for monks, which commands that one disdain the vanities of life? Is it thus that you have renounced the world and all that is in the world? Is it thus that you have become crucified unto the world and to all its vanities? Have you not heard the Lord Who says: *Have neither gold nor silver nor two coats?* (Matt. 10:9). Why have you forgotten these commandments? Behold, today or tomorrow our life will end, and *whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?* (Luke 12:20). Do you not know that the angel who protects you has gone far away from you with weeping, and the devil stands next to you, and around your neck the serpent of love of money has become entwined, and you do not notice it? I speak the truth to you: while passing by I heard the Lord renouncing you. I entreat you: give your possessions to the poor, to widows and orphans, the poor and strangers who have no place to lay their heads. Strive again to be the friend of God. If you will not obey me, you will perish by a cruel death. In the name of Jesus Christ I testify that you will immediately see the devil."

After this he added: "Do you see him?"

And the spiritual eyes of the monk were opened, and he saw the devil, black as an Ethiopian, like a beast with frightful jaws; but he stood far away, and seeing Andrew did not dare to come near. Then the monk said to the Saint: "Slave of God, I see him, and a terrible fear has taken hold of me. Tell me, what must I do for the salvation of my soul?"

Andrew again said to him: "Believe me, if you do not obey me I

will send him upon you to torment you, and not only the citizens of this city shall hear of your shame, but all the four corners of the world as well. Take care, then, and do what I shall tell you."

Having heard this, the monk became afraid and promised to do everything the Saint had indicated. And immediately Andrew saw that from the east there came a mighty spirit in the form of lightning and touched that serpent, annihilating his power,. The serpent, not being able to bear this, turned into a raven and disappeared. The black Ethiopian perished likewise, and again the angel of God took power over the monk. Departing from the monk, the blessed one commanded him: "See to it that you say nothing about me, and I will begin to remember you in my prayers day and night, so that the Lord Jesus Christ might direct you on a good path."

After this the monk went and gave to the poor all his gold, and then he was even more glorified by God and men. Many brought him gold to distribute to the poor; but he ordered those who did this to distribute it with their own hands, saying: "What benefit is it to me to take care of someone else's dirt?"

At the time that he was living in this way which befits a monk, St. Andrew appeared to him with a joyful face in a vision; he indicated to him a bright tree in a field which had a blossom of a sweet fruit and said: "Give thanks to God, Father, that He has drawn you out of the jaws of the serpent and has made your soul like to a blossoming tree. Strive to convert this blossom into a sweet fruit. This splendid tree which you see is what your soul has acquired."

Coming to himself, the monk became yet stronger in spiritual activity and always gave thanks to God and to the God-pleaser Andrew, who had set him on the path of salvation.

8. *He beholds Paradise and the Third Heaven.*

Saint Andrew pleased God so much, and the Lord loved him so much, that once, like the Apostle Paul, he was raised up to the third heaven (II Cor. 12:2) and heard there unutterable words and beheld the beauties of the paradise which cannot be seen by mortals. He himself told this before his death to his faithful friend Nicephorus.

Once it happened that there was a harsh winter, and in Constantinople for two whole weeks there was a frightful freezing spell. All dwellings were covered with deep snow; because of the strong winds, trees were broken, and birds fell dead to the ground, finding no food for themselves. Then all the poor people and paupers were in great grief and difficulty; groaning,

weeping, and shivering from cold, they were dying as a result of their deprivations, hunger and cold. Then blessed Andrew also, having neither refuge nor clothing, experienced great grief as a result of the cold. When, desiring for only a short time to cover himself under a roof, he would go to other paupers, they chased him away with sticks like a dog, crying out: "Get out of here, you dog!"

Having no refuge from the disaster, and despairing for his very life, he said to himself: "Blessed is the Lord God! If I die from this frost, then let me at least die in love for Him—but God is mighty to give to me also patience to endure this frost."

Coming to a certain corner of the city, the Saint saw a dog lying there, and desiring to be warmed from him, he lay down with him. Seeing him, however, the dog got up and left. And Andrew said to himself: "O what a sinner you are, wretched one! Not only people, but even dogs despise you!"

When, therefore, he was lying down, shivering from the fierce cold and wind, his body became frozen and green, and he thought that the time had come for his last breath; and he began to pray that the Lord might receive his soul with peace. And behold, suddenly he felt within himself an inward warmth, and opening his eyes, he saw a certain splendid youth whose face was shining like the sun. He held in his hand a branch covered with various flowers. The youth looked at Andrew and said: "Andrew, where are you?"

Andrew replied: "Right now I am *in darkness and in the shadow of death*" (Psalm 87:7).

Then the youth who had appeared lightly touched Andrew on the face with the flowering branch which he held in his hand and said: "Receive life again in your body."

Saint Andrew breathed in the fragrance of those flowers. It penetrated into his heart, warmed and animated his whole body. Immediately after this he heard a voice saying: "Lead him, that he might repose here for a time, and then he will return."

With these words there came upon him a light sleep, and he beheld unutterable revelations of God, which he related in detail later to the above-mentioned Nicephorus in the following words:

"What it was that happened to me, I do not know. By God's will I remained for two weeks in a sweet vision, like a man who, having sweetly slept the whole night, awakens in the morning. I saw myself in a splendid and marvelous paradise, and being astonished at this in my soul, I reflected:

'What does this mean? I know that I live in Constantinople, but how I came here I do not know.' And I did not understand whether I was in the body or out of the body, God knows (II Cor. 12:2). But I saw myself adorned in a bright garment, as it were woven of lightning. On my head there lay a crown woven of many flowers. I was girded about with a royal belt and greatly rejoiced seeing that beauty. In mind and heart I was astonished at the unutterable beauty of the paradise of God, and I took sweet delight walking in it. There were a multitude of gardens there, filled with tall trees which, swaying in their tips, rejoiced my eyes, and from their branches there came forth a great fragrance. Some of those trees were constantly blossoming, others were adorned with golden leaves, and some had fruit of unutterable beauty. One cannot compare these trees in their beauty to any earthly tree, for they were not planted by the hand of man, but by God. In these gardens there were innumerable birds with wings golden, snow-white, and of various colors. They sat on the branches of the trees of paradise and sang so wondrously that from the sweetness of their singing I was beside myself; my heart was full of sweet delight, and I thought that their singing must be audible even in the very heights of heaven. Those splendid gardens stood in ranks, as one regiment stands beside another.

"When in the joy of my heart I walked in their midst, I saw a great river flowing in the middle of paradise which watered those splendid gardens. On both shores of the river there grew vineyards with vines adorned with leaves and golden clusters of grapes. From all four sides there were quiet and fragrant winds, from whose blowing the gardens swayed, producing with their leaves a splendid rustling.

"After this a kind of fear fell upon me, and it seemed to me that I was standing at the peak of the firmament of heaven. Before me a youth was walking with a face as bright as the sun, clothed in purple. I thought that this was the one who had struck me in the face with the blossoming branch. When I followed in his steps I saw a great and splendid Cross, in form like a rainbow, and around it stood fiery singers like flames and sang sweet hymns, glorifying the Lord Who had once been crucified on the Cross. The youth who was going before me, coming up to the Cross, kissed it and gave me a sign that I should also kiss the Cross. Falling down before the holy Cross with fear and great joy, I fervently kissed it. In kissing it I was filled with unutterable spiritual sweetness, and I smelled a fragrance more powerful than that of paradise. Going past the Cross, I looked down and saw under me as it were the abyss of the sea. It seemed to me that I was walking in the air; frightened, I cried out to my guide: "Master, I am afraid lest I fall

into the abyss."

"But turning to me, he said: 'Fear not, for we must ascend yet higher.'

"And he gave me his hand. When I seized it we were already above the second firmament. There I saw wondrous men, their repose, and the joy of their feasting which cannot be communicated by the human tongue. After this we entered a kind of marvellous flame; it did not scorch us, but only illuminated us. I began to be afraid, and again my guide, turning around, gave me his hand and said: 'We must ascend yet higher.'

"And behold, after these words we ascended above the third heaven, where I saw and heard a multitude of heavenly powers hymning and glorifying God. We went up to a curtain which shone like lightning, before which great and frightful youths were standing, in appearance like fiery flames; their faces shone brighter than the sun, and in their hands there were flaming weapons. Standing there with fear, I saw a numberless multitude of the heavenly host. And the youth who was leading me said to me: 'When the curtain opens, you shall see the Master Christ. Bow down to the throne of His glory.'

"Hearing this, I rejoiced and trembled, for I was overcome by terror and unutterable joy. I stood and looked, waiting for the curtain to open. And behold, a flaming hand opened the curtain, and like the Prophet Isaiah I beheld my Lord, *sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and above it stood the Seraphim* (Isaiah 6:1-2). He was clothed in a purple garment; His face was most bright, and His eyes looked on me with love. Seeing this, I fell down before Him, bowing down to the most bright and fearful throne of His glory. The joy that overcame me on beholding His face cannot be expressed in words. Even now, remembering this vision, I am filled with unutterable joy. In trembling I lay there before my Master, being astonished at His mercy in allowing me, an impious one and a sinner, to stand before Him and behold His Divine beauty. Reflecting on my unworthiness, and beholding the greatness of my Master, I was filled with tender feeling and repeated to myself the words of the Prophet Isaiah: *Woe is me! For I am a man and have unclean lips, and have been vouchsafed with my eyes to see my Lord* (Isaiah 6:5).

"And I heard my most merciful Creator speaking to me with His most sweet and pure lips three Divine words, which so sweetened my heart and inflamed it with love that from spiritual warmth I entirely melted like wax, and there was fulfilled in me the word of David: *My heart is become like wax melting in the midst of my bowels* (Psalm 21:6). After this all the heavenly host sang a most wondrous and unutterable hymn, and then—I myself do not understand how—again I found myself walking in paradise. And I reflected

on the fact that I had not seen the Most Holy Lady Theotokos. And behold, I saw a man, bright like a cloud, bearing a Cross and saying: 'Did you wish to see here the Queen Who is more bright than the heavenly powers? She is not here; She has gone away to the world which lies in great misfortune, to help people and to comfort the sorrowing. I would have shown you Her holy place, but now there is no time, for you must again return to the place from which you have come; thus the Master commands you.'

"When he had said this, it seemed to me as if I fell into a sweet sleep; then, awakening, I found myself in the same place where I had been before, lying in a corner. And I was astonished at where I had been during my vision, and what I had been vouchsafed to see. My heart was filled with unutterable joy, and I gave thanks to my Master Who had deigned to reveal to me such grace."

This vision Saint Andrew related before his death to his friend Nicephorus, and he took an oath from him that he would not reveal it to anyone until Saint Andrew had been freed from the bonds of the body. Nicephorus fervently entreated the Saint to tell him at least one of those three words which the Lord had uttered to him; but the Saint did not desire to reveal this. Thus Saint Andrew, being transported like the Apostle Paul, saw what the corruptible eye has not seen, heard what the mortal ear has not heard, and took sweet delight in the revelation of such heavenly beauties as have not entered into the heart of man (I Cor. 2:9).

9. *The Vision of the Protection of the Mother of God.*

Because, during the revelation to him of the heavenly mysteries, the Saint had not seen the Most Pure Lady Theotokos, he was vouchsafed to see Her on earth in the vision in the temple of Blachernae, when She, coming to help men, appeared in the air with the Prophets, Apostles, and choirs of angels, praying for men and covering them with Her precious omophorion. Seeing Her, the blessed one said to his disciple Epiphanius: "Do you see the Queen and Mistress of all praying?"

Epiphanius replied: "I see, holy Father, and I am terrified."

While St. Andrew and Epiphanius were beholding this wondrous vision, the Mother of God prayed for a long time, watering with tears Her Most Pure face. Finishing Her prayer, She went to the Altar-table and prayed here also for the people who were present. Then She took from Herself the great and fearful covering, the omophorion, which She was wearing on Her Most Pure head and which shone like lightning, and holding it with great solemnity with Her Most Pure hands, stretched it out over the standing

people. These wondrous men beheld this covering stretched out over the people for a considerable time, and as long as the Most Holy Mother of God was there, the covering was visible. When She departed, it also became invisible, but the grace of this visitation remained with the people.*

Leading such a wondrous life, Saint Andrew performed many miracles and endured many mockeries and blows, as is related in the separate book of his life written by Nicephorus. He prophesied the future and converted to repentance many sinners. Then he was translated into the eternal mansions to which earlier he had been raised up for a time. And now, dwelling in them forever, he rejoices with the angels and in blessedness stands before God, One in Three Persons: Father and Son and Holy Spirit, to Whom may there be glory unto the ages. Amen.

KONTAKION, TONE 4

Having become a fool voluntarily,* thou didst utterly hate the beauties of this world,* and thou didst mortify carnal wisdom* by hunger and thirst, by heat and bitter frost;* and never avoiding rain and snow and other hardships of weather,* thou didst purify thyself as gold in the furnace,* O blessed Andrew.

* This paragraph has been added from the Russian *Lives of Saints*, Oct. 1, p. 6. The feast of the Protection is celebrated with special solemnity by the Orthodox Church on October 1; the Icon of the Feast shows St. Andrew and Epiphanius beholding the vision. Epiphanius is generally assumed to be the noble youth who later became a monk with the name of Polyeuctus and was Patriarch of Constantinople, dying in 956 (commemorated on Feb. 5). St. Andrew died in the year 936, at the age of 66.

THE SOUL AFTER DEATH

"OUT-OF-BODY" EXPERIENCES IN OCCULT LITERATURE

"Astral Travelling"

Almost all of the recent "after-death" experiences have been extremely brief; if they had been longer, actual death would have resulted. But in the "out-of-body" state that is not bound up with near-death conditions, a longer experience is possible. If this experience is of sufficient duration, one can leave one's immediate environment behind and enter an entirely new landscape — not merely for a brief glimpse of a "garden" or a "bright place" or a "heavenly city", but for an extended "adventure" in the aerial realm. The "astral plane" is evidently quite close to every man, and certain critical experiences (or mediumistic techniques) can "project" one into contact with it. In one of his books, Dr. Carl Jung describes the experience of one of his patients, a woman who had an "out-of-body" experience while undergoing a difficult birth. She saw the doctors and nurses around her, but behind her she was aware of a glorious landscape which seemed to be the boundary of another dimension; she felt that if she turned toward it, she would leave this life—but she returned to her body instead.*

Dr. Moody has recorded a number of such experiences, which he calls the "border" or "limit" experience *(Life after Life,* pp. 54-57).

* C.G. Jung, *The Interpretation of Nature and the Psyche,* Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1955, p. 128.

Those who deliberately induce the experience of "astral projection" are often able to enter into this "other dimension." Just in recent years one man's descriptions of his "journeys" in this dimension have achieved a certain fame, which has allowed him to establish an institute for experiments in the "out-of-body" state. One of the students of this institute has been Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, who agrees with Monroe's conclusions regarding the similarity of "out-of-body" experiences and the "after-death" state. Here we shall summarize the findings of this experimenter.**

Robert Monroe is a successful American business executive (president of the board of directors of a multi-million dollar corporation) and an agnostic in religion. His "out-of-body" experiences began in 1958, before he had any interest in occult literature, when he was conducting his own experiments in data-learning techniques during sleep; this involved exercises in concentration and relaxation similar to some techniques of meditation. After starting these experiments, he had the unusual experience of seeming to be struck with a beam of light, which caused temporary paralysis. After this sensation had been repeated several times, he began "floating" out of the body, and then began to experiment with inducing and developing this experience. In this beginning of his occult "journeys," he reveals the same basic characteristics—a passive meditation, an experience of "light," a basic attitude of trust and openness to new and strange experiences, all in conjunction with a "practical" outlook on life and a lack of any profound awareness or experience of Christianity—that opened Swedenborg to his adventures in the world of spirits.

At first Monroe's "journeys" were to recognizable places on earth—nearby places in the beginning, then places farther away—with some successful attempts to bring back actual evidence of the experiences. Then he began to contact "ghost-like" figures, the first contact being as part of a mdiumistic experiment (the "Indian guide" sent by the medium actually came for him!—p. 52). Finally, he began to enter into contact with strange landscapes seemingly not of earth.

** Robert A. Monroe, *Journeys Out of the Body*, Anchor Books (Doubleday), Garden City, New York, 1977 (first printing, 1971).

Taking detailed notes on his experiences (which he recorded as soon as he returned to the body), he categorized them all as belonging to three "locales": "Locale I" is the "here-now," the normal this-worldly environment. "Locale II" is a "non-material" environment seemingly immense, with characteristics identical with those of the "astral plane." This locale is the "natural environment" of the "Second Body," as Monroe calls the entity that travels in this realm; it "interpenetrates" the physical world, and its laws are those of thought: "as you think, so you are," "like attracts like," in order to travel one need only *think* of one's destination. Monroe visited various "places" in this realm, where he saw such things as a group of people wearing long robes in a narrow valley (p. 81), and a number of uniformed people who called themselves a "target army" waiting for assignments (p. 82). "Locale III" is a seemingly earth-like reality that is however, unlike anything known on this earth, with strangely anachronistic features; Theosophists would probably understand this as just another more"solid" part of the "astral plane."

After largely overcoming his initial feeling of fear when finding himself in these unknown realms, Monroe began to explore them and to describe the many intelligent beings he encountered there. On some "journeys" he encountered "dead" friends and conversed with them, but more often he found strange impersonal beings who sometimes "helped" him but just as often failed to respond when he called, who gave vague "mystical" messages that sound like the communications of mediums, who might shake his hand but were just as likely to dig a hook into his offered hand (p. 89). Some of these beings he recognized as "hinderers": beast-like creatures with rubbery bodies that easily change into the shapes of dogs, bats, or his own children (pp. 137-140), and others who tease and torment him and merely laugh when he calls (not in faith, it is true, but only as another "experiment") on the name of Jesus Christ (p. 119).

Having no faith of his own, Monroe opened himself to the "religious" suggestions of the beings of this realm. He was given "prophetic" visions of future events, which

sometimes did, in fact, come to pass as he saw them (pp. 145ff). Once, when a white ray of light appeared to him on the boundary of the out-of-body state, he asked it for an answer to his questions about this realm. A voice from the ray answered: "Ask your father to tell you of the great secret." At the next opportunity Monroe accordingly prayed: "Father, guide me. Father, tell me the great secret" (pp. 131-2). It is obvious from all this that Monroe, although remaining "secular" and "agnostic" in his own religious outlook, gave himself over freely to be used by the beings of the occult realm (who, of course, are demons).

Just like Dr. Moody and other investigators in this realm, Monroe writes that "in twelve years of non-physical activities, I find no evidence to substantiate the biblical notions of God and afterlife in a place called heaven" (p. 116). However, just like Swedenborg, Theosophists, and investigators like Dr. Crookall, he finds in the "non-material" environment he explored "all of the aspects we attribute to heaven and hell, which are but part of Locale II" (p. 73). In the area seemingly "closest" to the material world he encountered a gray-black area populated by "nibbling and tormenting beings"; this, he thinks, may be the "border of hell" (pp. 120-121), rather like the "Hades" region Dr. Crookall has identified.

Most revealing, however, is Monroe's experience of "heaven." Three times he travelled to a place of "pure peace," floating in warm, soft clouds which were swept by constantly-changing colored rays of light; he vibrated in harmony with the music of wordless choirs; there were nameless beings around him in the same state, with whom he had no personal contact. He felt this place to be his ultimate "Home," and was lonely for it for some days after the experience ended (pp. 123-5). This "astral heaven," of course, is the ultimate source of the Theosophist teaching on the "pleasantness" of the other world; but how far it is from the true Christian teaching of the Kingdom of Heaven, far outside this aerial realm, which in its fullness of love and personality and the conscious presence of God has become utterly remote from the unbelievers of our times, who ask nothing more than a

"nirvana" of soft clouds and colored lights! The fallen spirits can easily provide such an experience of "heaven"; but only Christian struggle and the grace of God can raise one into the true heaven of God.

On several occasions, Monroe has encountered the "God" of his heaven. This event, he says, can occur anywhere in "Locale II." "In the midst of normal activity, wherever it may be, there is a distant Signal, almost like heraldic trumpets. Everyone takes the Signal calmly, and with it, everyone stops speaking or whatever he may be doing. It is the Signal that He (or They) is coming through His Kingdom.

"There is no awestruck prostration or falling down on one's knees. Rather, the attitude is most matter-of-fact. It is an occurrence to which all are accustomed and to comply takes absolute precedence over everything. There are no exceptions.

"At the Signal, each living thing lies down . . . with head turned to one side so that one does not see Him as He passes by. The purpose seems to be to form a living road over which He can travel . . . There is no movement, not even thought, as He passes by . . .

"In the several times that I have experienced this, I lay down with the others. At the time, the thought of doing otherwise was inconceivable. As He passes, there is a roaring musical sound and a feeling of radiant, irresistible living force of ultimate power that peaks overhead and fades in the distance . . . It is an action as casual as halting for a traffic light at a busy intersection, or waiting at the railroad crossing when the signal indicates that a train is coming; you are unconcerned and yet feel unspoken respect for the power represented in the passing train. The event is also impersonal.

"Is this God? Or God's son? Or His representative?" (pp. 122-3.)

It would be difficult to find, in the occult literature of the world, a more vivid account of the worship of satan in his own realm by his impersonal slaves. In another place, Monroe describes his own relationship to the prince of the realm into which he has penetrated. One night, some two years after the start of his "out-of-body" journeys, he felt

himself bathed in the same kind of light that accompanied the beginning of these experiences, and he felt the presence of a very strong, intelligent, personal force which rendered him powerless and with no will of his own. "I received the firm impression that I was inextricably bound by loyalty to this intelligent force, always had been, and that I had a job to perform here on earth" (pp. 260-261). In another similar experience with this unseen force or "entity" several weeks later, it (or they) seemed to enter and "search" his mind, and then, "they seemed to soar up into the sky, while I called after them, pleading.* Then I was sure that their mentality and intelligence were far beyond my understanding. It is an impersonal, cold intelligence, with none of the emotions of love or compassion which we respect so much . . . I sat down and cried, great deep sobs as I have never cried before, because then I knew without any qualification or future hope of change that the God of my childhood, of the churches, of religion throughout the world was not as we worshiped him to be—that for the rest of my life, I would 'suffer' the loss of this illusion" (p. 262). One could scarcely imagine a better description of the encounter with the devil which so many of our unsuspecting contemporaries are now undergoing, being helpless to resist it because of their estrangement from true Christianity.

The value of Monroe's testimony regarding the nature and the beings of the 'astral plane" is great. Although he himself became deeply involved in it and actually gave his soul over in submission to the fallen spirits, he described his experiences in a straightforward, non-occult language and from a relatively normal human point of view that make his book a persuasive warning against "experiments" in this realm. Those who know the Orthodox Christian teaching on the aerial world, as well as on the true heaven and hell which

* This latter experience is very similar to that undergone by many people today in close encounters with "Unidentified Flying Objects" (UFOs). The occult experience of encountering the fallen spirits of the air is always one and the same experience, even though it is expressed in different images and symbols in accordance with human expectations. (For a discussion of the occult side of UFO encounters, see *Orthodox and the Religion of the Future,* St. Herman Monastery Press, 2nd Edition, 1979, ch. VI.)

are outside it, can only be the more firmly convinced of the reality of the fallen spirits and their realm, as well as of the great danger of contacting them even through a seemingly "scientific" approach.** As Orthodox Christian observers, we do not need to know how much of his experience was "real" and how much was a result of spectacles and illusions engineered for him by the fallen spirits; deception is so much a part of the aerial realm that there is no point in even trying to unravel its precise forms. But that he did encounter the realm of the fallen spirits cannot be doubted.

The "astral plane" can also be contacted (but not necessarily in an "out-of-body" state) through the use of certain drugs. Recent experiments in administering LSD to dying persons has produced very convincing "near-death" experiences, together with a "condensed replay" of one's entire life, a vision of blinding light, encounters with the "dead" and with non-human "spiritual beings," and the communication of spiritual messages concerning the truths of "cosmic religion," reincarnation, and the like. Dr. Kubler-Ross has also been involved in these experiments.***

It is well known that the shamans of primitive tribes enter into contact with the aerial world of fallen spirits in "out-of-body" states, and once "initiated" into this experience are able to visit the "world of spirits" and communicate with its beings.*

The same experience was common among the initiates of the "mysteries" of the ancient pagan world. In the *Life* of St. Cyprian and Justina (Oct. 2) we have the first-hand testimony of a former sorcerer concerning his experiences in this realm:

"On Mt. Olympus Cyprian studied all manner of diabolical arts: he mastered various demonic transformations, learned how to change the nature of the air . . . In this place

** Monroe's observation, made also by many other experimenters in this area, that "out-of-body" experiences are invariably accompanied by a high degree of sexual excitement, only confirms the fact that these experiences attract the lower side of man's nature and have nothing whatever spiritual about them.

*** Stanislav Grof and Joan Halifax, *The Human Encounter with Death,* E. P. Dutton, New York, 1977.

* See M. Eliade, *Shamanism,* Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1961.

he saw a numberless legion of demons, with the prince of darkness at their head; some stood before him, others served him, still others cried out in praise of their prince, and some were sent into the world in order to corrupt people. Here he likewise saw in their false forms the pagan gods and goddesses, and also diverse phantoms and specters, the invocation of which he learned in a strict forty-day fast . . . Thus he became a sorcerer, magician, and destroyer of souls, a great friend and faithful slave of the prince of hell, with whom he conversed face to face, being vouchsafed to receive from him great honor, as he himself testified. 'Believe me,' he said, 'I have seen the prince of darkness himself . . . I greeted him and his ancients . . . He promised to make me a prince after my departure from the body, and for the course of earthly life to help me in everything . . . The outward appearance of the prince of darkness was like a flower. His head was covered by a crown (not an actual, but a phantom one) made of gold and brilliant stones, as a result of which the whole space around him was illuminated; and his clothing was astonishing. When he would turn to one or the other side, that whole place would tremble, a multitude of evil spirits of various degrees stood obediently at his throne. I gave myself over entirely into his service at that time, obeying his every command." (*The Orthodox Word,* 1976, no. 70, pp. 136-138.)

St. Cyprian does not state explicitly that he had these experiences out of the body; it would indeed seem that more advanced sorcerers and adepts do not need to leave the body in order to achieve full contact with the aerial realm. Swedenborg, even while describing his own "out-of-body" experiences, stated that most of his contact with spirits was, on the contrary, in the body, but with his "doors of perception" opened*(Heaven and Hell,* Sections 440-442). Still, the characteristics of this realm, and one's "adventures" in it, are the same whether one happens to be "in" or "out" of the body.

One of the famous pagan sorcerers of antiquity (2nd century), in describing his initiation into the mysteries of Isis, gives a classic example of the "out-of-body" experience, the

contact with the aerial realm, that could be used to describe some of today's "out-of-body" and "after-death" experiences:

"I will record (of my initiation) as much as I may lawfully record for the uninitiated, but only on condition that you believe it. *I approached the very gates of death and set one foot on Proserpine's threshhold, yet was permitted to return, rapt through all the elements. At midnight I saw the sun shining as if it were noon; I entered the presence of the gods of the underworld and the gods of the upper world, stood near and worshipped them.* Well, now you have heard what happened, but I fear you are still none the wiser."*

Conclusions about the "Out-of-Body" Realm

All that has been said here about "out-of-body" experiences is sufficient to place today's "after-death" experiences in their proper perspective. Let us summarize what we have found:

1. These are, purely and simply, "out-of-body" experiences, something well known especially in occult literature, which have been happening with increasing frequency in recent years to ordinary people who are not at all involved in occultism. These experiences, however, in actual fact tell us almost nothing of what happens to the soul after death, except that it does survive and is conscious.

2. The realm into which the soul immediately enters when it leaves the body and begins to lose contact with what we know as "material reality" (whether after death or in a simple "out-of-body" experience) is neither heaven nor hell, but an invisible realm close to earth which is variously called the "After-death" or "Bardo plane" *(Tibetan Book of the Dead),* the "world of spirits" (Swedenborg and spiritism), the "astral plane" (Theosophy and most of occultism), "Locale II" (Monroe)—or, in Orthodox language, the aerial world of the under-heaven where fallen spirits dwell and are active in deceiving men for their damnation. This is not the "other world" that awaits man after death, but only the invisible

* Apuleius, *The Golden Ass,* tr. by Robert Graves, Farrar, Straus and Young, New York, 1951, p. 280. Proserpine (or Persephone) was the Queen of Hades in Greek and Roman mythology.

part of *this* world that man must pass through to reach the truly "other" world of heaven or hell. For those who have truly died, and are being conducted by angels out of earthly life, this is the realm where the Particular Judgment begins at the aerial "toll-houses," where the spirits of the air reveal their real nature and their hostility towards mankind; for all others, it is a realm of demonic deception at the hands of these same spirits.

3. *The beings contacted in this realm are always (or almost always) demons,* whether they are invoked by mediumism or other occult practices, or encountered in "out-of-body" experiences. They are not angels, for these dwell in heaven and only pass through this realm as messengers of God. They are not the souls of the dead, for they dwell in heaven or hell and only pass through this realm immediately after death on their way to judgment for their actions in this life. Even those most adept in "out-of-body" experiences cannot remain in this realm for long without danger of permanent separation from the body (death), and even in occult literature such adepts are rarely described as meeting each other.

4. *Experiences in this realm are not to be trusted, and certainly are not to be taken at their "face-value."* Even those with a firm grounding in Orthodox Christian teaching can be easily deceived by the fallen spirits of the air with regard to any "vision" they may see; but those who enter this realm with no knowledge of it and accept its "revelations" with trust are nothing more than pitiful victims of the fallen spirits.

It may be asked: What of the feelings of "peace" and "pleasantness" which seem to be almost universal in the "out-of-body" state. What of the vision of "light" which so many see? Are these only deceptions also?

In a sense, it may be, these experiences are "natural" to the soul when separated from the body. Our physical bodies in this fallen world are bodies of pain, corruption, and death. When separated from this body, the soul is immediately in a state more "natural" to it, closer to the state God intends for it; for the resurrected "spiritual body" in which man will dwell in the Kingdom of Heaven has more in common with

the soul than with the body we know on earth. Even the body with which Adam was created in the beginning had a nature different from the body after Adam's fall. being more refined and not subject to pain or travail.

In this sense, the "peace" and "pleasantness" of the out-of-body experience may be considered real and not a deception. Deception enters in, however, the instant one begins to interpret these "natural" feelings as something "spiritual"—as though this peace were the true peace of reconciliation with God, and the "pleasantness" were the true spiritual pleasure of heaven. This is, in fact, how many people interpret their "out-of-body" and "after-death" experiences, because of their lack of true spiritual experience and awareness. That this is a mistake may be seen from the fact that even the crudest unbelievers have the same experience of pleasantness when they "die." We have already seen this in an earlier chapter in the case of Hindus, an atheist, and a suicide. Another striking example is that of the agnostic British novelist, Somerset Maugham, who, when he had a brief "death" experience just before his actual death at the age of 80, experienced first an ever-increasing light and "then the most exquisite sense of release," as he described it in his own words (see Allen Spreggett, *The Case for Immortality,* New American Library, New York, 1974, p. 73). This experience was not in the least spiritual; it was but one more "natural" experience in a life that ended in unbelief.

As a sensuous or "natural" experience, therefore, it would seem that death is indeed pleasant. This pleasantness may be experienced equally by one whose conscience is clean before God, and by one who does not deeply believe in God or eternal life at all, and therefore has no awareness of how he may have displeased God during his lifetime. A "bad death" is experienced, as one writer has well said, only by "those who know that God exists, and yet have lived their lives as though He did not"*—i.e., those whose consciences torment them and counteract by their pain the natural "pleasure" of physical death. The distinction between believers and

* David Winter, *Hereafter: What Happens after Death?* Harold Shaw Publishers, Wheaton, Ill., 1977, p. 90.

unbelievers occurs, then, not at the moment of death itself, but later, at the Particular Judgment. The "pleasantness" of death may be real enough, but it has no necessary connection whatever with the eternal fate of the soul, which may well be one of torment.

All the more is this true of the vision of "light." This *may* be something merely natural also—a reflection of the true state of light for which man was created. If so, it is still a serious mistake to give it the "spiritual" meaning which the spiritually inexperienced invariably give it. Orthodox ascetic literature is filled with warnings against trusting any kind of "light" that might appear to one; and when one begins to interpret such a light as an "angel" or even "Christ," it is clear that one has already fallen into deception, weaving a "reality" out of one's own imagination even before the fallen spirits have begun their own work of deception.

It is also "natural" for the soul apart from the body to have a heightened awareness of reality and to exercise what is now called "extra-sensory perception" (ESP). It is an obvious fact, noted both in Orthodox literature and in modern scientific investigations, that the soul just after "death" (and often just before death) sees things that bystanders do not see, knows when someone is dying at a distance, etc. A reflection of this may be seen in the experience Dr. Moody calls "the vision of knowledge," when the soul seems to have an "enlightenment" and to see "all knowledge" in front of it (*Reflection on Life after Life,* pp. 9-14). St. Boniface describes the immediate experience after death of the "monk of Wenlock" thus: "He felt like a man seeing and wide-awake, whose eyes had been veiled by a dense covering and then suddenly the veil was lifted and everything made clear which had previously been invisible, veiled and unknown. So with him, when the veil of the flesh was cast aside the whole universe seemed to be brought together before his eyes so that he saw in one view all parts of the earth and all seas and peoples" (Emerton, *Letters of St. Boniface,* p. 25).

Some souls seem to be naturally sensitive to similar experiences, even while still in the body. St. Gregory the Great notes that "sometimes it is through a subtle power of their

own that souls can foresee the future," as opposed to those who foresee the future by God's revelation *(Dialogues,* IV, 27, p. 219). But such "psychics" invariably fall into deception when they begin interpreting or developing this talent, which can be properly used only by persons of great sanctity and (of course) Orthodoxy of belief. The American "psychic" Edgar Cayce is a good example of the pitfalls of such "ESP": once he discovered that he had a talent for accurate medical diagnosis in a trance-state, he began to trust *all* the messages received in this state and ended by giving himself off as a prophet of the future (sometimes with spectacular wrongness, as with the West-coast cataclysm which failed to occur in 1969), offering astrological readings, and tracing out the "past lives" of men in "Atlantis," ancient Egypt, and elsewhere.

The "natural" experiences of the soul when it is especially sensitive or is separated from the body—whether these be experiences of "peace" and pleasantness, light, or "ESP"—are therefore only the "raw material" of the soul's heightened awareness, but give (we must say again) very little positive information about the state of the soul after death, and all too often lead one to unwarranted interpretations of the "other world" as well as into direct contact with the fallen spirits whose realm this is. Such experiences are all of the "astral" world and have in themselves nothing spiritual or heavenly; even when the experience itself is real, the interpretations given to it are not to be trusted.

5. By the very nature of things, *a true knowledge of the aerial realm of spirits and its manifestations cannot be acquired by experience alone.* The boast of all branches of occultism that their knowledge is sure because it is based on "experience" is precisely the fatal flaw of all occult "knowledge." Rather, the experiences of this realm, because they occur in the aerial realm and are often produced by demons with the ultimate intent of deceiving and destroying men's souls, *are by their very nature bound up with deception,* quite apart from the fact that man, not being at home in this realm, can never fully orient himself in it and be sure of its reality as he can of the material realm. Buddhist doctrine (as expressed in the *Tibetan Book of the Dead)* is certainly correct when it

speaks of the illusionary nature of the appearances of the "Bardo plane"; but it is wrong when it concludes from this, on the basis of experience alone, that there is no objective reality whatever behind these appearances. The reality of this invisible realm cannot be known for what it actually is unless this be revealed by a source outside and above it.

The contemporary approach to this realm by means of personal and/or "scientific" experimentation is, for the same reason, bound to result in misleading and deceptive conclusions. Almost all contemporary researchers accept or at least are highly sympathetic to the occult teaching regarding this realm, for the single reason that it is based on experience, which is also the basis of science. But "experience" in the material world is something quite different from "experience" in the aerial realm. The raw material being experienced and studied in the one case is morally "neutral," and it can be studied objectively and verified by others; but in the other case the "raw material" is hidden, extremely difficult to grasp, and, in many cases, *has a will of its own*—a will to deceive the observer. For this reason, serious investigations such as those of Dr. Moody, Dr. Crookall, Drs. Osis and Haraldsson, and Dr. Kubler-Ross almost inevitably end by being used for the spread of occult ideas, which are the "natural" ideas to be drawn from a study of the occult aerial realm. Only with the idea (which has become rare today) that there is a revealed *truth* that is above all experience, can this occult realm be enlightened, its true nature recognized and a discernment made between this lower realm and the higher realm of heaven.

It has been necessary to devote this long chapter to "out-of-body" experiences in order to define as precisely as possible the nature of the experiences now being undergone by a large number of ordinary people not merely mediums and occultists. (In the conclusion of this book we shall try to explain why such experiences have become so common today.) It is quite clear that these experiences are real, and cannot be dismissed as "hallucinations." But it is equally clear that these experiences are not spiritual, and the attempts of those who have undergone them to interpret them as "spiritual experiences"

which reveal the true nature of life after death and the ultimate state of the soul---only serve to increase the spiritual confusion of contemporary mankind and reveal how far its awareness is from true spiritual knowledge and experience.

In order to see this the better, we shall now turn to an examination of several cases of *true* experiences of the other world—the eternal world of heaven which is opened to man only by the will of God, and which is quite distinct from the aerial realm we have been examining here, which is still part of *this* world which will have an end.

To be continued.

With the blessing of His Eminence, Archbishop Anthony
of Western America and San Francisco

the St. Herman Summer Pilgrimage

will be held this year once more on the feast of St. Herman's canonization,
at the St. Herman of Alaska Monastery, Platina, California

Approximate Program:

Wednesday, August 8 (N.S.): Reception of pilgrims, Small Vespers and rule of prayer for those receiving Holy Communion; Vigil for the Feast.

Thursday, August 9; Divine Liturgy of the Feast, followed by church procession, meal, and lectures; in the evening: a film showing the suffering of Christians behind the Iron Curtain.

Friday, August 10: Further lectures and discussions, with another film or slides in the evening.

Beginning Saturday, August 11, there will be a series of courses and lectures in basic Orthodox Christian knowledge, lasting until Sunday, August 6/19 (the Feast of the Transfiguration). The courses will cover such subjects as the Orthodox Patristic interpretation of Scripture, the Holy Fathers, and early Christian literature.

The entire Pilgrimage and courses and all meals are free to all. Pilgrims should bring their own sleeping bags, and those staying for the courses will be expected to share in necessary general labors.